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no. 58

A True COPY of a LETTER FROM His Majesty's Camp BETWEEN Mecklin and Vilvoord IN FLANDERS.

July 22.

Written by a Gentleman of Quality in the Army, to a Friend of his in London.

7. Aug. 1693.

SIR,

ON *Tuesday* last, being the 18*th.* Instant, the King immediately after Dinner, received Advice that some *French* Squadrons began to appear on the Hills before the Camp: Also that morning we heard that the *French* were in Motion, though it was not known which way. That morning I had rid out with the King to the end of the Left Wing of our Camp, and I heard his Majesty ask, What are those Squadrons, seeing some at a good distance, and which no body else would take notice of; but about three his Majesty got on Horse-back, and soon disposed the Army into its due order, for receiving the Enemy if they advanc'd. All that Evening we beheld the Enemy gently approaching towards us; and our Army as well as theirs lay that night under their Arms in the open Field, without Tents or any refreshment. His Majesty also lay that night in one of his Coaches in his Clothes; the next morning we beheld the *French* Squadrons and Batalions nearer to us, expecting to receive them from the Ground where we had posted our selves, and where we had towards the Right cast up a good Trench in the night time. It is since said that the *French* did little expect to find us there in the morning, but thought we should retreat in the night, because their Numbers were so much superior to ours; for they were esteemed to be 80000. whereas our Army, after the Duke of *Wirtemberg*'s Detachment, and 10 Batalions more to *Liege* from *Hoperting* Camp, was not thought to have been above 45000. which Number in the Muster-Roll seldom gives above 40000 effective Men, as some tell me. About half an hour after Four that morning our Cannon began to play, and in a little time they returned upon us, both of us playing from different Batteries till after eight, and then our small Shot began to Fire, and we drove the *French* out of a Village they had possessed before

a Village they had poſſeſſed before us; which Attack was led on by the Duke of *Frieſland*; then they came on more towards the Right, but ſeeing our Trenches that we had caſt up, they retreated; after this their main Attack was on our Right Wing, which was continued for about five Hours, and our Men often repulſed them with great bravery and reſolution; but they ſtill ſupplying their Men with freſh Batalions to ſupport them as they drew off, or filed before ours; and our Foot being at laſt ſpent for want of more reſerves, and ſome Horſe on our ſide not behaving themſelves ſo well as thy ſhould, the *French* at laſt broke in upon us, and our Men gave way, ſo that we loſt the Field of Battle, and retreated in ſome diſorder, having left many of our Cannon behind us.

We took the Duke of *Berwick*, and ſome others, Priſoners, who were ſent ſome hours before to *Leewe*. Count *Solmes*, as he was ſitting upon the ground, at the Head of Brigadier *Earl*'s Regiment, had one Leg about the Ancle much ſhattered and contuſed by a Canon Bullet, which alſo wounded the inward part of his other Thigh, of which wounds we hear he ſince died: The Duke of *Ormond* having his Horſe ſhot under him, and his Groom being then out of the way, with his other Horſes, he went and charged on Foot, and was taken Priſoner, but one of the Wretches who took him, drew a Dagger and run him through the Neck, of which Wound he is like to recover. Mr. *Zeuleſtein*, and Major General *Scravenmore* are alſo Priſoners. My Lord *Portland* is Wounded in one of his Fingers of each hand, but that hinders not my Lord's great and continual application to buſineſs. The *French* have no great reaſon to boaſt of a Victory; for Monſieur *Gattinier* tells me, That there are 28000 dead on the place of Battel, whereof we as yet reckon them to have loſt but 21000. An *Aid du Camp*, of the Elector of *Bavaria*, was ſent hither laſt Night to inform His Majeſty that the *French* have ſent 6000 Wounded Soldiers to *Namur*, and above 600 Wounded Officers, beſides what they have ſent to *Mons* and other Gariſons: And inſtead of purſuing us from *Neer Heſpen*, or advancing at all ſince the Battle, they are retreated towards *Tongres*: They have loſt Forty Officers of very great Quality, whereof ſeven Brigadier Generals; whereas we have not loſt ſo much as one Colonel or General Officer, beſides thoſe mentioned to be taken Priſoners.

We have loſt only the name of a Victory; but the real Advantage and Honour lies wholly on our ſide. The Court is all one, juſt as full as before. The ſtrength of our Defence we wholly owe, under God, to his moſt Excellent Majeſty, of whoſe Galantry and Conduct the *French* Officers are ſo very ſenſible, that ſeveral of them have ſaid to Monſieur *Zeuleſtins Aid du Camp*, who has been among them to ſee his Maſter ſince the Fight, That if our King were theirs they ſhould *adore him*. His Majeſty on ſuch Occaſions is indefatigable, and can live on Horſe-back longer than the ſtrongeſt of his Followers. He led up himſelf divers Attacks, and rallyed our Men, that would otherwiſe have fled. He had one Bullet ſtruck on his Scarfe about his Middle, but God be thanked did his Majeſty no harm: Another Bullet went through his Peruke and did no hurt.

It ſtrikes me ſtill with Horror to think to what Danger the Safety of all *Europe* was expoſed in his Majeſty's Perſon. We are now encamp'd between two Rivers near *Vilvoord*. And this day my Lord *Athlone*, and General *Talmaſh* joyned us with their Army, which they had brought from about *Dieſt*. The Duke of *Wirtemberg* is ordered to encamp four or five Miles off, here being not room enough to receive him: And we do, or ſhall ſoon find our ſelves much ſtronger than before. I ſhall only add, That with the extraordinary Fatigue of that terrible Day, his Majeſty had indeed loſt much of that Plumpneſs and Ruddineſs which he had before. The whole Day of Battle and the Night following, when he lay upon Straw in a little Cottage, near *Tirlemont*, his Majeſty did not cough at all; but he was the worſe for his not coughing. Now he begins already to return to his priſtine Vigour and good Complexion, which I never ſaw his Majeſty to have better than before the Fight.

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